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DOCTOR STRANGE
MASTER OF THE ARTS
THE MAGICIAN IS DEAD--AND DRACULA HAS SLAIN HIM!
THE SORCERER SUPREME BATTLES THE LORD OF VAMPIRES TO THE DEATH--AND BEYOND!
'NUFF SAID!

Once he was a man like most *others* — a *worldly* man, seduced and jaded by *material* things. But then he discovered the *separate* reality, where *sorcery* and *men's souls* shaped the forces that shape our *lives*. In that instant, he was *born again*, to become a man like *no* other—a man who left us *behind*, as he strove to stand against the unseen subtle perils hovering *thick* and *black* around our fragile existence...

Stan Lee presents: Dr. STRANGE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!™

IN TOMB OF DRACULA #44, NOW ON SALE...
YOU SOUGHT RETRIBUTION, MAGICIAN-- RETRIBUTION FOR THE DEATH OF YOUR MAN-SERVANT, WONG, AT MY HANDS--
--BUT WHAT YOU FOUND HERE IN MY LAIR WAS YOUR OWN DEATH--
--THE LIVING DEATH OF THE VAMPIRE!
STEVE ENGLEHART AUTHOR
GENE COLAN · ARTIST
TOM PALMER · INKS/COLOR
JOHN COSTANZA LETTERER
MARV WOLFMAN EDITOR
JV269

THE TOMB OF DR. STRANGE!

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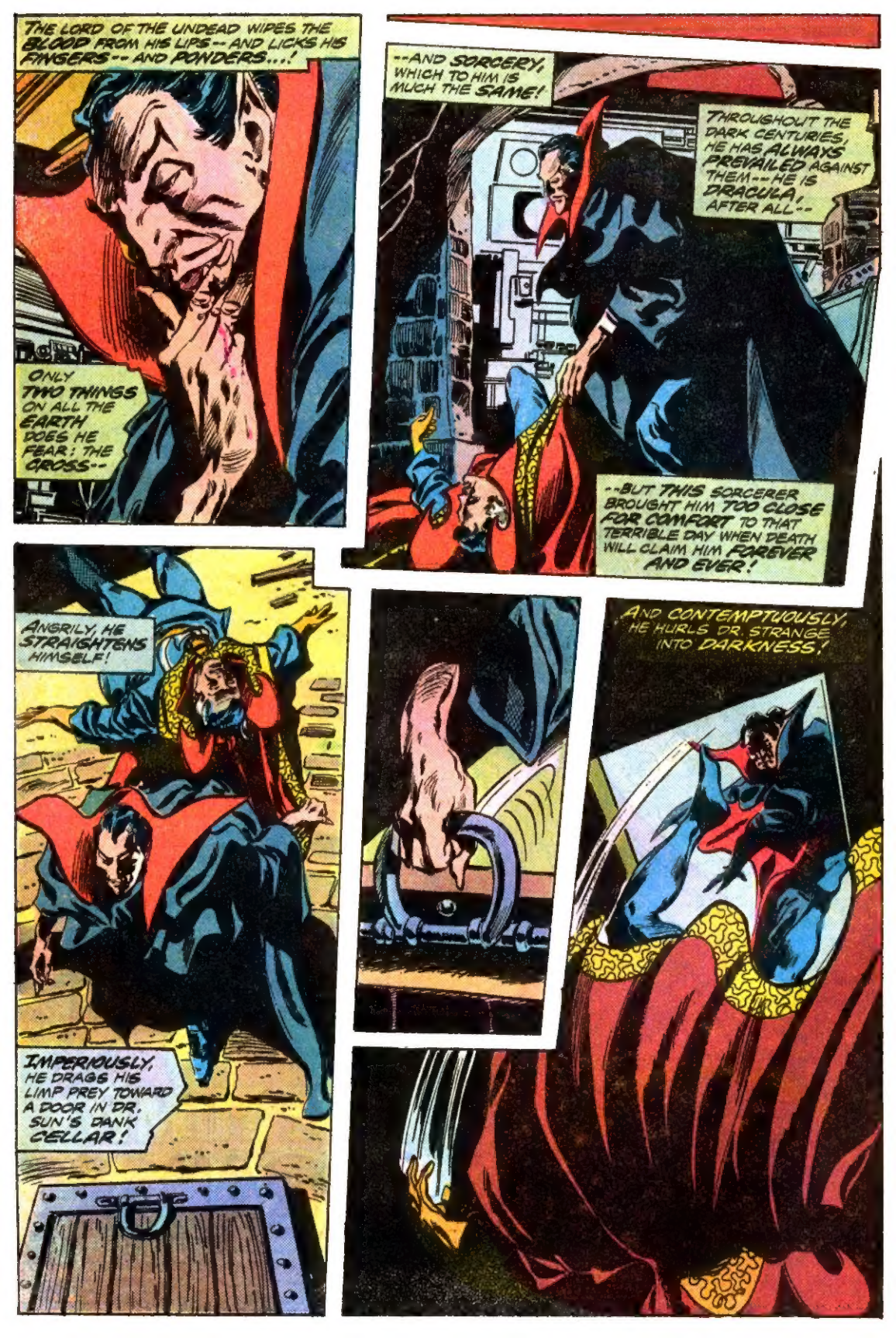
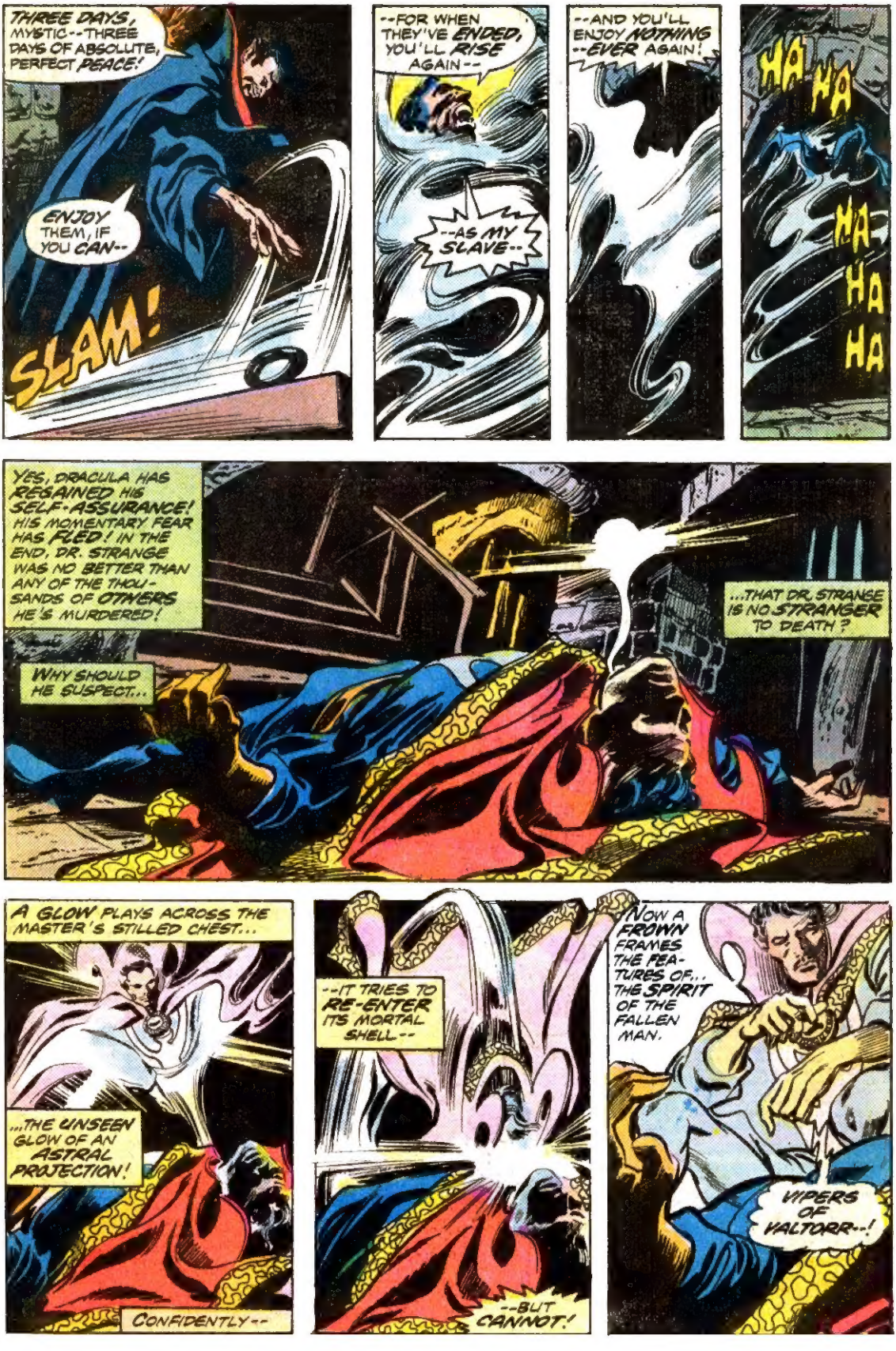
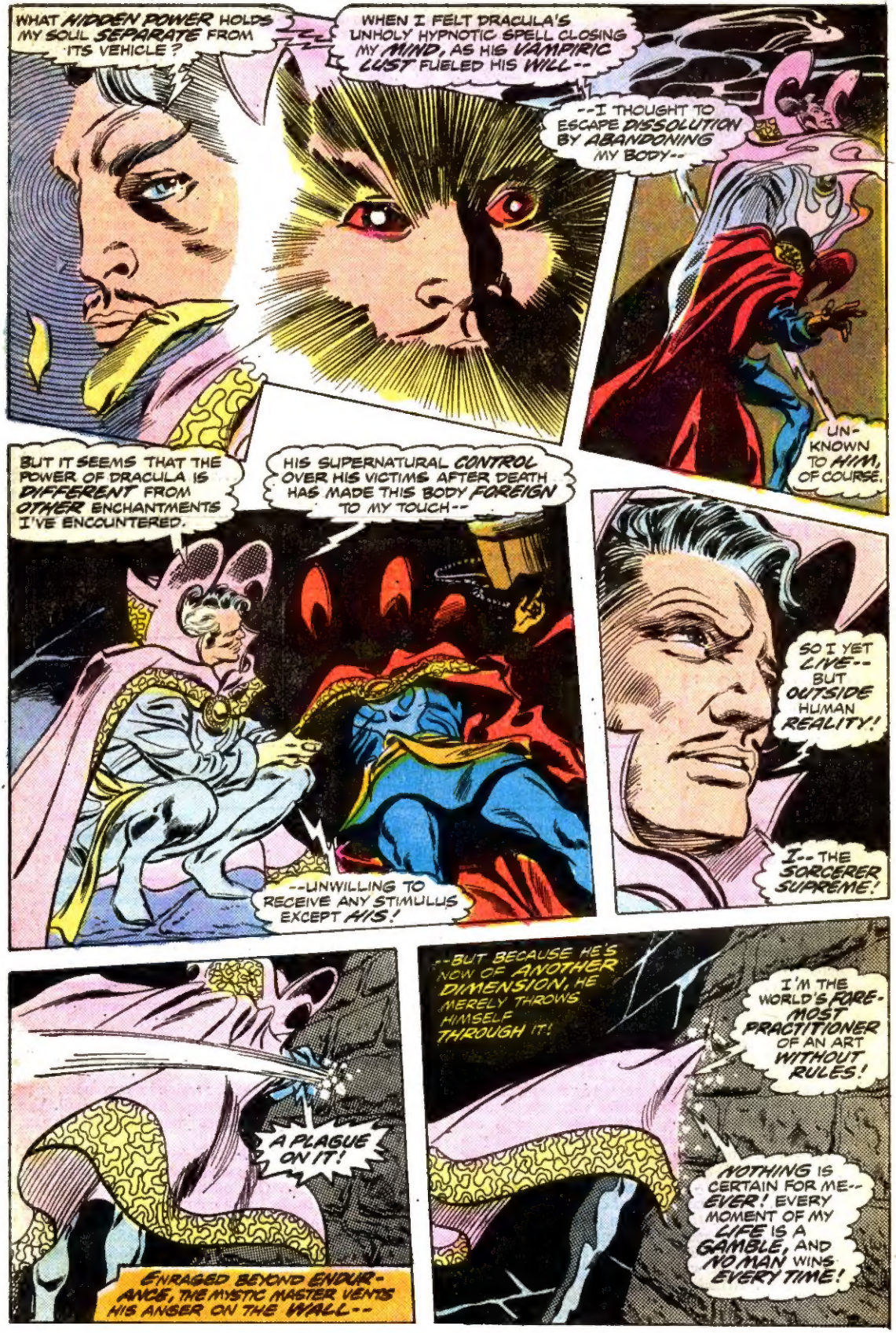
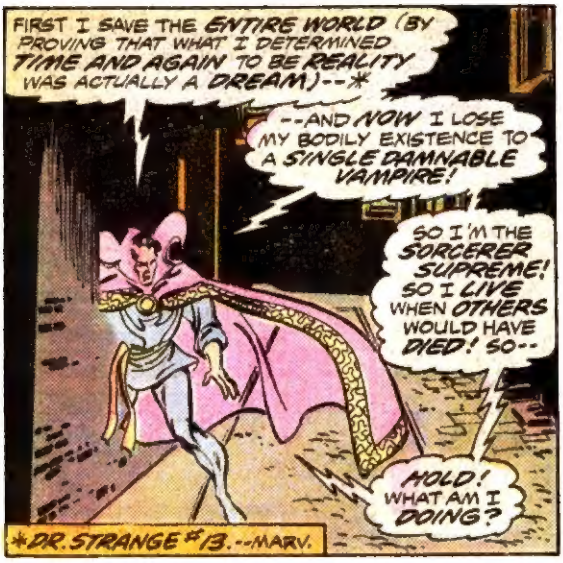
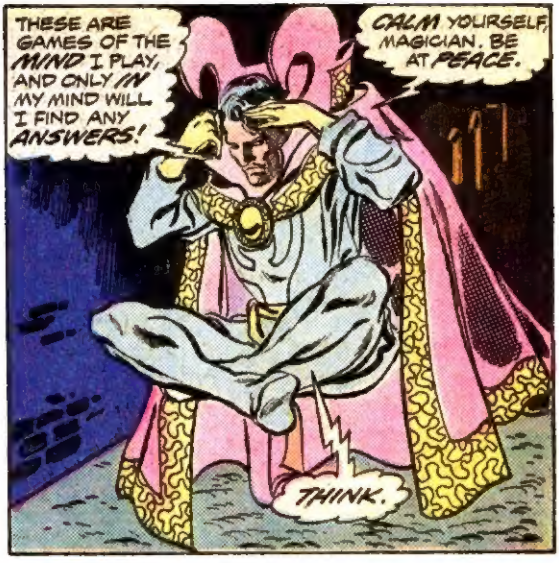

THE LORD OF THE UNDEAD WIPES THE BLOOD FROM HIS LIPS -- AND LICKS HIS FINGERS -- AND PONDERS...!
ONLY TWO THINGS ON ALL THE EARTH DOES HE FEAR: THE CROSS--
--AND SORCERY, WHICH TO HIM IS MUCH THE SAME!
THROUGHOUT THE DARK CENTURIES, HE HAS ALWAYS PREVAILED AGAINST THEM -- HE IS DRACULA, AFTER ALL --
--BUT THIS SORCERER BROUGHT HIM TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT TO THAT TERRIBLE DAY WHEN DEATH WILL CLAIM HIM FOREVER AND EVER!
ANGRILY, HE STRAIGHTENS HIMSELF!
IMPERIOUSLY, HE DRAGS HIS LIMP PREY TOWARD A DOOR IN DR. SUN'S DANK CELLAR!
AND CONTEMPTUOUSLY, HE HURLS DR. STRANGE INTO DARKNESS!

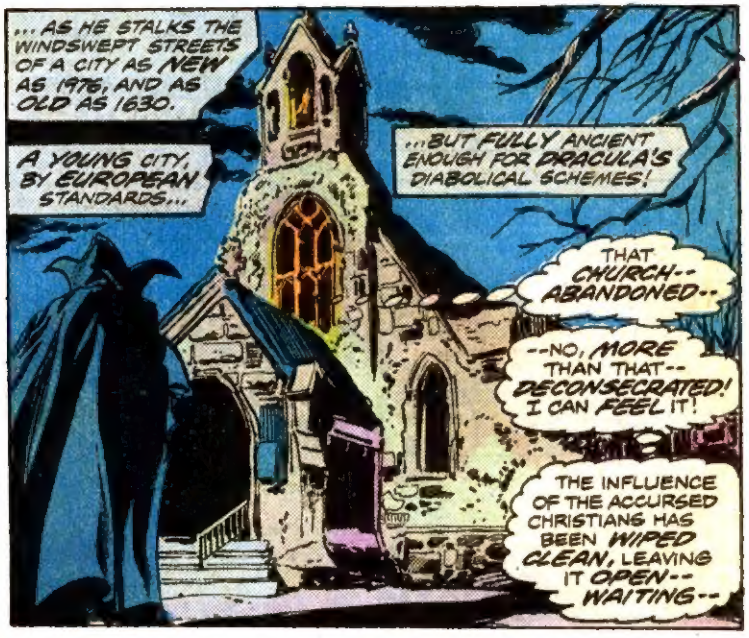

THREE DAYS, MYSTIC--THREE DAYS OF ABSOLUTE, PERFECT PEACE!
ENJOY THEM, IF YOU CAN--
SLAM!
--FOR WHEN THEY'VE ENDED, YOU'LL RISE AGAIN--
--AS MY SLAVE--
--AND YOU'LL ENJOY NOTHING --EVER AGAIN!
HA HA
HA-HA HA
YES, DRACULA HAS REGAINED HIS SELF-ASSURANCE! HIS MOMENTARY FEAR HAS FLED! IN THE END, DR. STRANGE WAS NO BETTER THAN ANY OF THE THOUSANDS OF OTHERS HE'S MURDERED!
WHY SHOULD HE SUSPECT...
...THAT DR. STRANGE IS NO STRANGER TO DEATH?
A GLOW PLAYS ACROSS THE MASTER'S STILLED CHEST...
...THE UNSEEN GLOW OF AN ASTRAL PROJECTION!
CONFIDENTLY--
--IT TRIES TO RE-ENTER ITS MORTAL SHELL--
--BUT CANNOT!
NOW A FROWN FRAMES THE FEATURES OF... THE SPIRIT OF THE FALLEN MAN.
VIPERS OF VALTORR--!


WHAT HIDDEN POWER HOLDS MY SOUL SEPARATE FROM ITS VEHICLE?
WHEN I FELT DRACULA'S UNHOLY HYPNOTIC SPELL CLOSING MY MIND, AS HIS VAMPIRIC LUST FUELED HIS WILL--
--I THOUGHT TO ESCAPE DISSOLUTION BY ABANDONING MY BODY--
UN-KNOWN TO HIM, OF COURSE.
BUT IT SEEMS THAT THE POWER OF DRACULA IS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER ENCHANTMENTS I'VE ENCOUNTERED.
HIS SUPERNATURAL CONTROL OVER HIS VICTIMS AFTER DEATH HAS MADE THIS BODY FOREIGN TO MY TOUCH--
--UNWILLING TO RECEIVE ANY STIMULUS EXCEPT HIS!
SO I YET LIVE-- BUT OUTSIDE HUMAN REALITY!
I-- THE SORCERER SUPREME!
A PLAGUE ON IT!
ENRAGED BEYOND ENDURANCE, THE MYSTIC MASTER VENTS HIS ANGER ON THE WALL--
--BUT BECAUSE HE'S NOW OF ANOTHER DIMENSION, HE MERELY THROWS HIMSELF THROUGH IT!
I'M THE WORLD'S FOREMOST PRACTITIONER OF AN ART WITHOUT RULES!
NOTHING IS CERTAIN FOR ME-- EVER! EVERY MOMENT OF MY LIFE IS A GAMBLE, AND NO MAN WINS EVERY TIME!

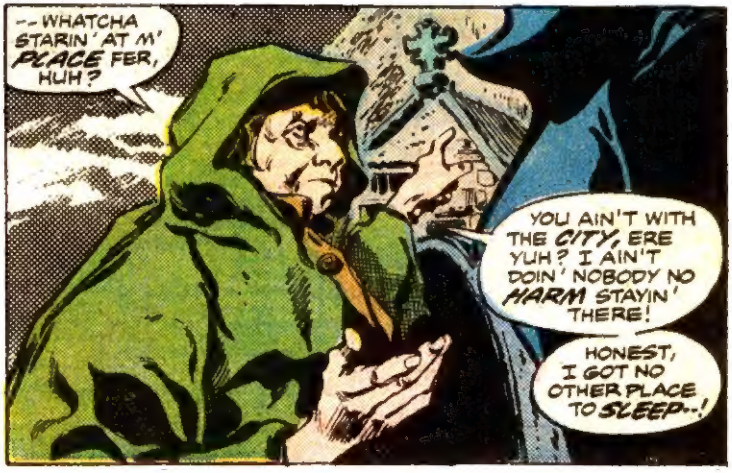

FIRST I SAVE THE ENTIRE WORLD (BY PROVING THAT WHAT I DETERMINED TIME AND AGAIN TO BE REALITY WAS ACTUALLY A DREAM)--*
--AND NOW I LOSE MY BODILY EXISTENCE TO A SINGLE DAMNABLE VAMPIRE!
SO I'M THE SORCERER SUPREME! SO I LIVE WHEN OTHERS WOULD HAVE DIED! SO--
HOLD! WHAT AM I DOING?
*DR. STRANGE #13.--MARV.


THESE ARE GAMES OF THE MIND I PLAY, AND ONLY IN MY MIND WILL I FIND ANY ANSWERS!
CALM YOURSELF, MAGICIAN. BE AT PEACE.
THINK.

YOU, READER, MAY THINK THIS IS NOT THE DR. STRANGE YOU'VE COME TO KNOW--AND IN SEVERAL SENSES, YOU ARE CORRECT...
...BUT WE'LL LEARN MORE OF THAT LATER.
FOR NOW, WE'LL SHIFT JUST 24 HOURS AHEAD, TO FOLLOW A FIGURE WITH NO REFLECTION...

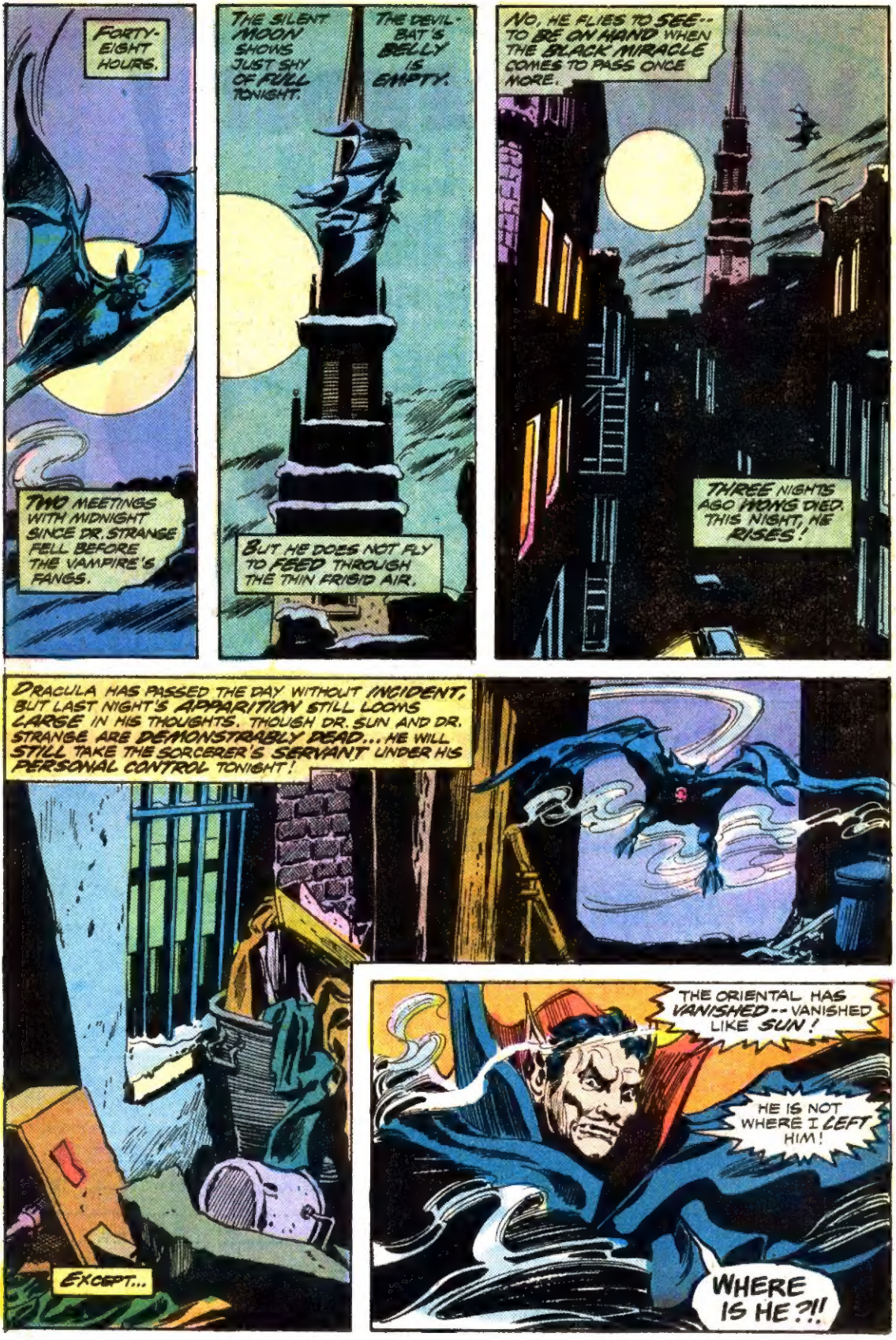

...AS HE STALKS THE WINDSWEPT STREETS OF A CITY AS NEW AS 1976, AND AS OLD AS 1630.
A YOUNG CITY, BY EUROPEAN STANDARDS...
...BUT FULLY ANCIENT ENOUGH FOR DRACULA'S DIABOLICAL SCHEMES!
THAT CHURCH--ABANDONED--
--NO, MORE THAN THAT--DECONSECRATED! I CAN FEEL IT!
THE INFLUENCE OF THE ACCURSED CHRISTIANS HAS BEEN WIPED CLEAN, LEAVING IT OPEN--WAITING--

--FOR ME--
WHAT--?
HEY--HEY, MEESTER--


--WHATCHA STARIN' AT M' PLACE FER, HUH?
YOU AIN'T WITH THE CITY, ERE YUH? I AIN'T DOIN' NOBODY NO HARM STAYIN' THERE!
HONEST, I GOT NO OTHER PLACE TO SLEEP--!

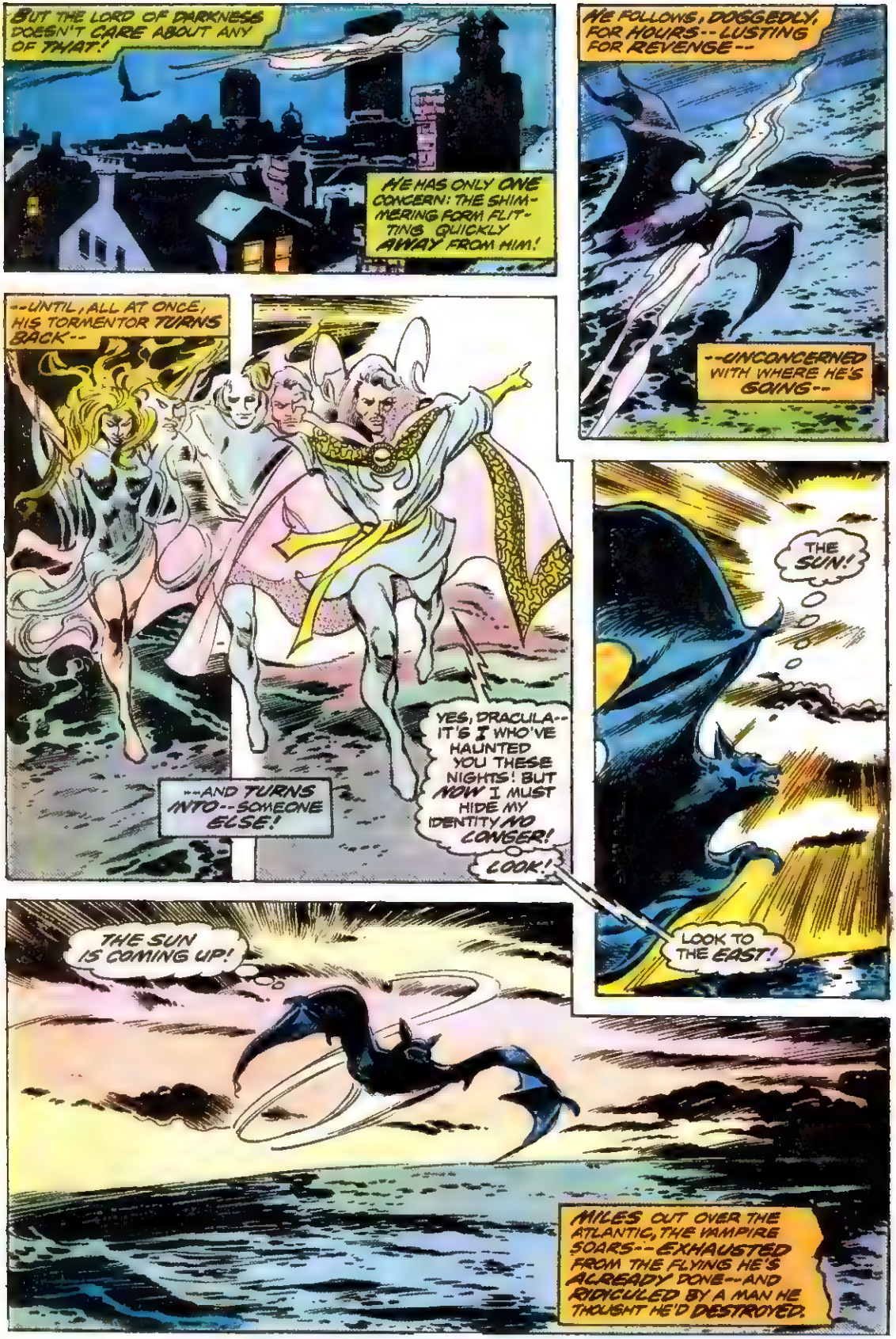
I CAN PROVIDE YOU WITH A NEW PLACE OF REST, MADAM--
FOR I NOW HAVE NEED OF THIS ONE!
EEEIII EE
BOSTON'S NOT AN ALL-NIGHT TOWN--NOT IN FEBRUARY, AT ANY RATE, WHEN MASSACHUSETTS BAY AND ITS MANY RIVERS PULL THE WINTER'S CHILL INTO EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY OF THE PEOPLE'S LIVES.
LOGICALLY, BOSTON SHOULD BE BUNDLED IN BED AND NO ONE SHOULD BE ABROAD--
--TO WHISPER OF WITNESS TO MURDER!
DRACULA...!
EH? WHAT NOW--?
DOES ANOTHER FOOL--
DOCTOR SUN!
NO, VAMPIRE --THE GHOST OF DOCTOR SUN! YOU DESTROYED ME--RE-* MEMBER?
*IN DRACULA #42.--M.
PFAGH! I DO NOT BELIEVE--
WHAT MADNESS IS THIS? THE BRAIN TURNS TO VAPOR!
--ONLY TO REFORM, ONCE OR A THOUSAND TIMES!
YOU CANNOT ESCAPE ME, DRACULA! YOU MUST PAY FOR YOUR MANY SINS--
--AND YOU SHALL!
PFFET
VANISHED--!

BUT WE SHALL SEE WHO PAYS FOR WHAT, DOCTOR SUN! WE SHALL SEE!
THE LORD OF DARKNESS HAS WON GREAT VICTORIES OF LATE-- FIRST AGAINST THE BRAIN-BEINGS, AND THEN AGAINST THE PRESUMPTUOUS MAGICIAN!
AS HE RETURNS TO THE HOUSE OF DOCTOR SUN, HE WAXES MORE AND MORE WROTH THAT HIS TRIUMPHS SEEM IN ANY WAY TARNISHED!
IF I WERE SUBJECT TO BEING HAUNTED, I'D HAVE KNOWN IT LONG BEFORE NOW! THEN WHAT OTHER ANSWER--?
SOME MACHINE OF SUN'S--?
OR-- SORCERY!
BUT A SWIFT DESCENT TO THE BODY OF HIS PREVIOUS EVENING'S VICTIM SOON LAYS THAT IDEA TO REST.
NO... DR. STRANGE IS UNQUESTIONABLY A CORPSE!
THEN DO YOUR WORST, SPIRIT-- OR WHATEVER YOU MAY BE!
I AM DRACULA!
DRACULA!
NOT ALL THE POWERS OF HEAVEN OR HELL CAN BRING AN END TO MY ETERNAL LIFE--
--NOR STIR ONE TRACE OF REMORSE FOR MY DEEDS IN THAT LIFE!
DO YOUR WORST, DOCTOR SUN! DRACULA DEFIES YOU!
HERE IN YOUR OWN DWELLING-- AS YESTERDAY AND AS TOMORROW-- I SHALL REMAIN!

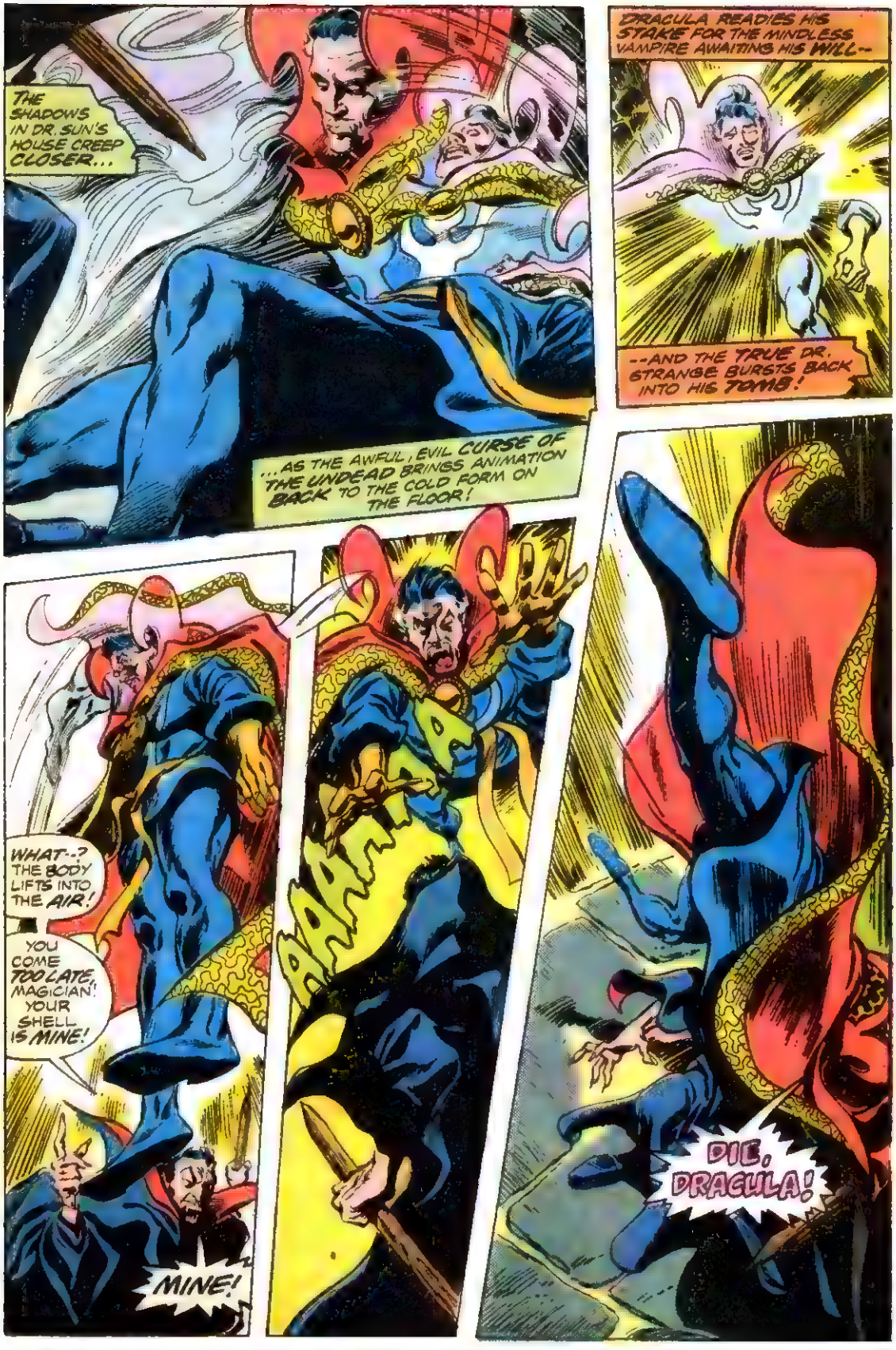

FORTY-EIGHT HOURS.
TWO MEETINGS WITH MIDNIGHT SINCE DR. STRANGE FELL BEFORE THE VAMPIRE'S FANGS.
THE SILENT MOON SHOWS JUST SHY OF FULL TONIGHT.
THE DEVIL-BAT'S BELLY IS EMPTY.
BUT HE DOES NOT FLY TO FEED THROUGH THE THIN FRIGID AIR.
NO, HE FLIES TO SEE--TO BE ON HAND WHEN THE BLACK MIRACLE COMES TO PASS ONCE MORE.
THREE NIGHTS AGO HONGS DIED. THIS NIGHT, HE RISES!
DRACULA HAS PASSED THE DAY WITHOUT INCIDENT, BUT LAST NIGHT'S APPARITION STILL LOOMS LARGE IN HIS THOUGHTS. THOUGH DR. SUN AND DR. STRANGE ARE DEMONSTRABLY DEAD... HE WILL STILL TAKE THE SORCERER'S SERVANT UNDER HIS PERSONAL CONTROL TONIGHT!
EXCEPT...
THE ORIENTAL HAS VANISHED--VANISHED LIKE SUN!
HE IS NOT WHERE I LEFT HIM!
WHERE IS HE?!!

AND THEN--SUDDENLY--!
VLAD! MY LOVE! HOW CAN YOU HAVE FALLEN SO LOW?
HOW, VLAD?
MARIA--!
AND EVEN AS DRACULA RECOILS IN RECOGNI-TION OF HIS LONG-DEAD WIFE--
--SHE THROWS HER GIRLISH ARMS AROUND HIS NECK!
KISS ME, MY LOVE--AS YOU USED TO DO--
--AS YOU'VE DONE TO ALL THE OTHERS SINCE!
NO!!
GET AWAY FROM ME, FOUL DEMON! I'LL HAVE NONE OF YOUR LIES!
HEY! WHAT'S GOIN' ON IN HERE?
DEMON, YOU SAY, VLAD?
YES, VAMPIRE!
THE DEMON WHO'LL DRIVE YOU TO DIE FOR YOUR SINS!
FLAMES-- FROM HER FINGERS! DAMN YOU, SPIRIT--

--YOU'LL NOT BEDEVIL ME!!
HEY!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MAN? IT'S KIND OF COLD TO BE SLEEPING IN THE--
CLOD! TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME!
MY BUSINESS HERE IS WITH HER!
HUH?
THEY CANNOT SEE ME, DRACULA! ONLY YOU HAVE EARNED THAT RIGHT!
HEE HEE HEE
FAREWELL, VAMPIRE--FOR NOW!
MOST OF THE ASSEMBLED BOSTONIANS REFUSE TO BELIEVE WHAT THEY SEE NEXT, LIKE MILLIONS OF OTHER MEN AND WOMEN, WORLDWIDE--
--BUT SOME DO BELIEVE. AS WITH FLYING SAUCERS, THE REPORTS HAVE BEGUN TO MOUNT UP.

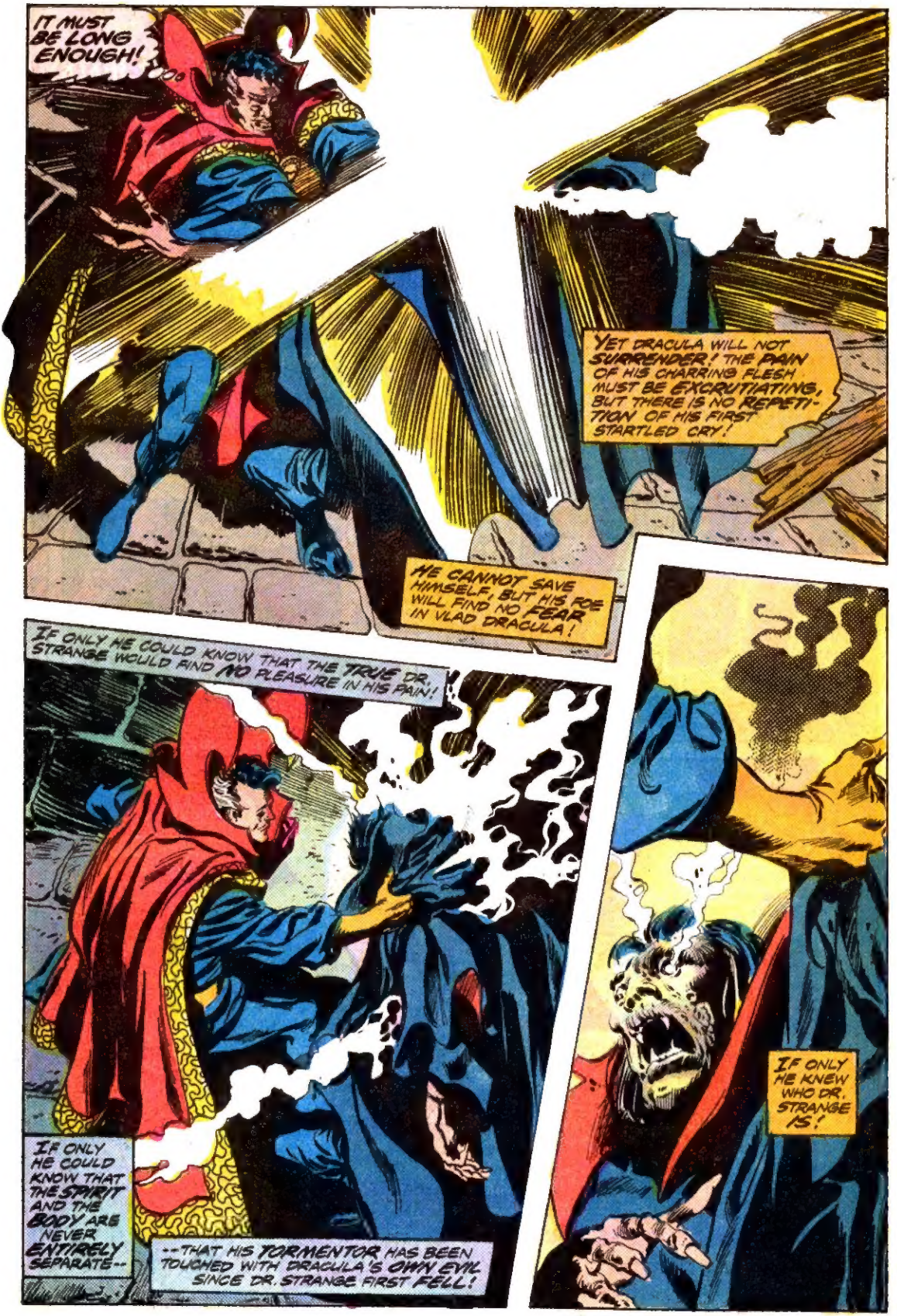

BUT THE LORD OF DARKNESS DOESN'T CARE ABOUT ANY OF THAT!
HE HAS ONLY ONE CONCERN: THE SHIMMERING FORM FLITTING QUICKLY AWAY FROM HIM!
HE FOLLOWS, DOGGEDLY, FOR HOURS--LUSTING FOR REVENGE--
--UNCONCERNED WITH WHERE HE'S GOING--
--UNTIL, ALL AT ONCE, HIS TORMENTOR TURNS BACK--
--AND TURNS INTO--SOMEONE ELSE!
YES, DRACULA--IT'S I WHO'VE HAUNTED YOU THESE NIGHTS! BUT NOW I MUST HIDE MY IDENTITY NO LONGER!
LOOK!
THE SUN!
LOOK TO THE EAST!
THE SUN IS COMING UP!
MILES OUT OVER THE ATLANTIC, THE VAMPIRE SOARS--EXHAUSTED FROM THE FLYING HE'S ALREADY DONE--AND RIDICULED BY A MAN HE THOUGHT HE'D DESTROYED.

STILL, THIS IS DRACULA!
GRIMLY, ALMOST GALLANTLY, HE STRAINS HIS EVERY MUSCLE TO RIDE THE ON-SHORE WIND!
EVEN SO, HE COULD NEVER REACH BOSTON -- BUT THEN, HE SPIES CAPE COD JUTTING FAR OUT TO SEA!
HE'S FLOWN FROM THE SUN, BUT THE SUN WAS FASTER. NOW IT CRAWLS FULL OVER THE HORIZON--
--AS HIS BURNING EYES PICK OUT AN ABANDONED SHACK!
HE SCREAMS FOR SOOTHING DARKNESS--
--AND FALLS!
CREEEEEEK
THIRD NIGHT!
I SURVIVED, SORCERER!
NOW, AS YOU ARISE--
--I SWEAR YOU SHALL NOT!


THE SHADOWS IN DR. SUN'S HOUSE CREEP CLOSER...
...AS THE AWFUL, EVIL CURSE OF THE UNDEAD BRINGS ANIMATION BACK TO THE COLD FORM ON THE FLOOR!
DRACULA READIES HIS STAKE FOR THE MINDLESS VAMPIRE AWAITING HIS WILL--
--AND THE TRUE DR. STRANGE BURSTS BACK INTO HIS TOMB!
WHAT--? THE BODY LIFTS INTO THE AIR!
YOU COME TOO LATE, MAGICIAN! YOUR SHELL IS MINE!
MINE!
AAAA
DIE, DRACULA!

I AM ETERNAL, FOOL!
THIS DEAD-THING NO LONGER RESPONDS TO ME, BUT NEITHER IS IT THE SORCERER I KNEW!
KLANG!
THE NATURES ARE MINGLED, HUMAN AND VAMPIRE--
--AND THE VAMPIRE APPEARS TO BE WINNING!
KRAK!
YOU MURDERED ME, COUNT! YOU CURSED ME!
DR. STRANGE WILL HAVE YOUR THROAT FOR IT!
YOU WOULD SPEAK THUS TO THE LORD OF VAMPIRES!?
YOU MISERABLE CLOD, I'VE SUFFERED ENOUGH FOR YOUR REBELLION!

YOU DOUBTLESS HOPED FOR A MORE ADVANTAGEOUS ALLIANCE WITH YOUR NEW SELF, STRANGE!
KRAM!
YOU HAVE MY CONDOLENCES ON YOUR CURRENT CONDITION!
BUT NO MATTER WHAT SORT OF VAMPIRE YOU MIGHT BE--
--I AM YOUR LORD!
AND DEEP WITHIN THE DOCTOR'S DARK THOUGHTS, THE REAL DR. STRANGE FEELS A JOLT! THE WORDS--
--THE WORDS THE VAMPIRE WITHIN WANTS TO IGNORE! "YOUR LORD!"
:AAAGHH!:
IN THE NAME OF THE TETRAGRAMMATON, JEHOVAH! O GREAT UNMANIFEST, HEAR MY PLEA!
THAT'S--WHO HOLDS POWER --HERE!
I'VE CALLED ON-- MANY GODS-- IN MY LIFE! NEVER-- HAVE I NEEDED STRENGTH--MORE THAN NOW!
MY TOUCH-- BURNS HIM! THE POWER-- HAS BEEN GIVEN ME!
BUT MY OWN SOUL SCREAMS IN AGONY AS WELL! HOW LONG--CAN I HOLD TOGETHER?


IT MUST BE LONG ENOUGH!
YET DRACULA WILL NOT SURRENDER! THE PAIN OF HIS CHARRING FLESH MUST BE EXCRUTIATING, BUT THERE IS NO REPETITION OF HIS FIRST STARTLED CRY!
HE CANNOT SAVE HIMSELF, BUT HIS FOE WILL FIND NO FEAR IN VLAD DRACULA!
IF ONLY HE COULD KNOW THAT THE TRUE DR. STRANGE WOULD FIND NO PLEASURE IN HIS PAIN!
IF ONLY HE KNEW WHO DR. STRANGE IS!
IF ONLY HE COULD KNOW THAT THE SPIRIT AND THE BODY ARE NEVER ENTIRELY SEPARATE--
--THAT HIS TORMENTOR HAS BEEN TOUCHED WITH DRACULA'S OWN EVIL SINCE DR. STRANGE FIRST FELL!

THE VAMPIRE IS DEAD! NOW, SWIFTLY, BEFORE I GO MAD--
--I ABJURE THE SPELL OF DARKNESS FROM THY BROW!
--I MUST CALL WONG BACK TO THIS DI-MENSION!
OLD FRIEND, BY THE POWER OF THE UNDEAD AND THE POWER OF THE ALL-LIFE--
AND NOW--
--MYSELF!
LIGHT BURSTS IN THE MYSTIC, AND THEN SHADOW, AND THEN BOTH AT ONCE--- BURSTING, CRASHING, SEARING... DYING!
AT DAWN...
WONG! YOU'RE --ALL RIGHT!
AND YOU, MASTER! WHAT HAS HAPPENED?
A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME-BATTLE, WONG--
--A TERRIBLE THING!
I COULD NEVER PERFORM SUCH FEATS AGAIN, FOR THE MIXTURE OF GOOD AND EVIL WOULD BE TOO MUCH TO BEAR A SECOND TIME!
THANK GOD, DRACULA WILL MENACE MAN NO MORE!
NEXT: IN DR. STRANGE #15, ON SALE IN THIRTY DAYS:
THE DEVIL'S WORKSHOP!